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SNOWMOBILE SAFETY

Michigan's outdoor fun starts heating up when the air chills and the snow flies. That's when snowmobile enthusiasts take to the trails for sport and adventure. With a network of 6,200 miles of groomed trails and exciting terrain, Michigan has some of the best riding in the Midwest, if not the country! It's no wonder Michigan registers more snowmobiles than any other state in the nation and attracts thousands of visitors as well.

Last year was the safest snowmobile season in Michigan in more than a decade. Unfortunately, 26 people were killed in snowmobile accidents, a loss of life both tragic and preventable, and many more were injured. Most of the fatalities and serious injuries involved excessive speed or alcohol consumption.

It is illegal in Michigan to operate a snowmobile while under the influence of alcohol. It is also against the law to travel at a rate of speed greater than is reasonable for existing conditions. To stay safe while having fun, know the rules and use common sense and trail courtesy. Before heading out, keep these safety tips in mind:

- Don't drink. Alcohol impairs judgment and slows reaction time.
- Slow down. Keep your vehicle under control.
- Know the conditions. Be well prepared for any contingency.
- Wear a helmet. State law requires that riders wear a USDOT approved crash helmet.
- Never ride alone. Try and travel in groups.
- Dress appropriately. Carry a first aid kit and safety gear.
- Avoid traveling across frozen bodies of water.
- Use extra caution at night. Don't overdrive your headlights.
- Leave a travel plan. Let someone know your destination and timetable.

Help make Michigan's snow trails fun and safe. For a free *Michigan Snowmobile and Safety Guide* listing more tips, please contact my office toll-free at 866-305-2135 or visit my website at www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/mcmanus. Or, visit the DNR website at www.michigan.gov/dnr to access full snowmobile rules and regulations, or to locate a snowmobile safety course.

I hope you and your family enjoy fun, safety and adventure in Michigan's winter wonderland this year!

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